

PORTS

IN MAKING

MENT

GINNERS

BY Cotton Statistics,

for North of the Census

Bureau, Who Expresses Sur-

prise and Concern. He

Warns Growers.

Director of the Census North in a

letter to Representative Burleson of

Texas, made public Thursday, takes

notice of the situation presented by

the cotton statistics given out for

publication Wednesday and expresses

his surprise and concern at the recent

alleged movement in the southern

States, "apparently approved and

augmented by the cotton growers

themselves," to destroy the census

reports by concerted refusal of the gin-

ners to make returns. Director North

asserts that a continuance of the cot-

ton ginning reports is impossible with-

out the sympathetic and wholeheart-

ed co-operation of the ginners of the

south. Immediately after the receipt

of the letter, Mr. Burleson, a mem-

ber of the house census committee,

and who was chairman of the provi-

sion making appropriation for the

gathering of cotton statistics, gave

out an interview in which he upholds

the director in the work now being

done by his bureau. The letter is as

follows:

Washington, D. C., Dec. 29, 1904.

Hon. Albert S. Burleson, House of

Representatives, Washington, D. C.

My Dear Sir: It seems proper to

invite your attention to certain anom-

alous conditions which confront the

census office in carrying out the

provisions of section 9 of the act to estab-

lish a permanent census office, direct-

ing the periodical collection of the

statistics of cotton production through

the agency of the ginners. This

provision was inserted in the law at

your urgent request and that of other

southern representatives, on the plea

that it was necessary for the protec-

tion of the cotton producers against

the depressing of the price of the staple

for their own benefit. It is urged

that enormous losses resulted from

the untrustworthy estimates put forth

every year by speculators and agents

of the Liverpool market, and that

early and trustworthy official infor-

mation regarding the size of the crop

would protect the grower, disarm the

speculator and market manipulator

and permit the law to regulate the

demand to regulate the prices.

EXTENSIVE INFORMATION.

Since the law was passed congress

has appropriated and this office has

disbursed more than \$125,000 a year

for the collection and dissemination of

this information. The system has

been gradually perfected until it has

become more nearly perfect than any

similar plan for obtaining exact know-

ledge of the size of any agricultural

crop during the progress of harvest-

ing.

No complaint has been made that

the census reports are not accurate,

indeed for a year or two past we have

been able to trace the crop so closely

practically every bale has been

traced.

Statistical increase in the

crop; for it becomes possible, by

comparison of the statistics of one

year with those of the same date in

preceding years, to judge the size of

successive crops with an accuracy

never before known or estimated.

The ginning reports of the census

office have crowded out the specula-

tive and interested estimates referred

to, and the single object which the

southern representatives had in view,

in urging this legislation, has been

successfully accomplished.

In view of these facts, I have been

surprised and concerned at the pre-

sented movement in the southern

States, which is apparently approved

and augmented by the cotton growers

themselves, to destroy the census

reports, by the concerted refusal of the

ginners to make the returns upon which

they are based. Thus far the movement

has not seriously affected our work,

but if it continues, it will inevitably

destroy the value of the statistics

of the coming year. It appears to have

been suddenly discovered that these

reports, undertaken solely at the

demand of the cotton growers, are

highly detrimental to their interests.

Mr. F. Webster, president of the Mem-

phis cotton exchange, is quoted as de-

claring that "the cotton interests of

the south have everything to lose and

nothing to gain by their continuance;

they put the manufacturing interests

in possession of information which

works irreparable injury to the

south." My attention has also been

called to the so-called "National Cot-

ton Ginner's association," the purpose

of which is stated to be "to gather

accurate and reliable information

regarding the amount of cotton pro-

duced in advance of the government

report." It also appears that "this

information is to be sent in code; and

the members of the association will

be sworn not to divulge it." The in-

formation is still highly desirable,

but possession of it is to be restricted

to those who grow and gin the cotton.

DISAPPOINTMENT OF GROWERS.

I can understand the disappointed

ment of cotton growers at the present

prices of cotton, and the feeling that

these prices are due to the un-

usual size of this year's cotton crop,

early and definite knowledge concern-

ing which has been given to the pub-

lic by the census reports. But I con-

firm myself unable to follow the

reasoning which leads the growers, and

through them the ginners, to imagine

that it will be to their advantage, be-

cause of this exceptional situation, to

destroy the efficiency of the official

machinery through which they learned

the present situation, early knowledge

of which has undoubtedly extended

the change in the price of cotton over

a much longer period, and thus saved

the growers and the country from

much larger losses than would other-

wise have been encountered in co-

operation with this year's crop. It

would seem to be plain that in the

long run, taking one year with an-

other, only one thing can decrease the

speculative element in the business

of cotton selling, and thus perman-

ently benefit the cotton grower, and

that is knowledge of the exact truth as

to the size of the crop, from an abso-

lutely impartial and trustworthy source,

at the earliest practicable date. This

was the manifest intention of the

southern representatives in congress

when the law was passed.

It is not my purpose, however, to

argue the matter. I simply desire to

call your attention to the fact that

the continuance of the census cotton

ginning reports is impossible without

the complete, sympathetic and whole-

hearted co-operation of the 30,000 gin-

ners of the southern cotton ginner's

association, which is impossible with-

out the co-operation of the ginners of

the south. The cotton ginner's asso-

ciation, which is the only organization

proposed to gather the same data "for

private information only." Moreover,

it cannot continue to promulgate

statistics of the quantity of cotton

ginned to certain date, after it has

reason to believe that these reports

are no longer correct, in consequence

of a concerted boycott by the ginners.

Otherwise it would be guilty of the

identical evil of misrepresentation

its reports were established to pre-

vent. The census bureau has no in-

terest in the matter whatever, beyond

the discharge of its duty as estab-

lished by law, and the maintenance of

its reputation for the compilation and

publication of accurate statistics.

WARNING TO GROWERS.

I have, therefore, decided to notify

you in this manner, through the cot-

ton growers of the south, that the

continuance of the movement

which they have begun will necessar-

ily result in the discontinuance of the

cotton ginning reports of the census

office, for without the hearty and

general cooperation of the ginners

these reports would cease to be ac-

curate and the compilation an unpardon-

able waste of public money. The situ-

ation would then revert to what it was

five years ago. But after the private

and interested estimates controlling

the market price have again for a

few years been too high, as they un-

doubtedly will be, and the repeated

losses of the cotton growers in conse-

quence, have again convinced them that

the change they demanded in 1901 was

a wise one, it will be far more diffi-

cult and may be impossible to induce

congress to reestablish a system which

the cotton growers set up once before

to a state of law when it changed

to a knowledge of the facts was to

their disadvantage.

I deem it my duty to acquaint you

with the probable course of the cen-

sus office, in order that you may take

any steps which may seem to you de-

sirable or necessary in connection

with the matter.

Very respectfully,

S. N. D. North,

Director.

Upon receipt of the letter, Mr.

Burleson gave out the following stat-

ment:

"Believing that it was to the in-

terest of the producer of cotton to

obtain the most accurate and possi-

bly reliable information regarding the

size of the crop, I have been

affected by the market price of cot-

ton, I caused to be embodied in the

act, making the census bureau per-

manent, the original item providing

for statistics of cotton ginned during

the current year, and the result of

census bureau's labors in carrying

out the present project has materi-

ally aided in accomplishing the

purpose. The result has not influenced a

change of opinion on my part.

A PERSONAL ALLUSION.

"If I may be pardoned a personal

allusion, a grower of cotton myself,

having frequently experienced the

damage occasioned by the high es-

timates and obscure assertions put

forward by those acting for speculators

and cotton gamblers, I felt the ne-

cessity of some impartial source of in-

formation which would be as accurate

as possible. This the census bureau

has provided.

"I concur in every word contained

in this letter of Mr. North and feel

that it would be nothing short of a

calamity if the ginners should at any

time fail to furnish prompt and ac-

curate reports to the census bureau.

"I fail to report to the census bureau

will only play into the hands of the

cotton gamblers and will serve to

promptly reestablish alleged statistical

agents, who are now, thanks to the

bureau of statistics of the department

of agriculture and the census bureau,

thoroughly discredited. If during